

WHAT IS CLAIMED:

1. A distributed information processing system, comprising:

a client device interface adapted to receive requests for information from a plurality of remote devices;

a module manager adapted to receive and route said requests from said client device interface; and

a plurality of information modules,

wherein said information modules register with said module manager and module manager routes said request to an appropriate one of said plurality of information modules in accordance with a type of information requested.
2. The distributed information processing system as recited in claim 1, wherein the requests to the client device interface are formatted as an HTML or plain-text formatted e-mail.
3. The distributed information processing system as recited in claim 1, wherein the appropriate one of said plurality of information modules generates a response that is returned to said module manager, and wherein said module manager routes said response to said client interface device for delivery to a requestor.
4. The distributed information processing system as recited in claim 1, wherein said requests and responses are formatted as serializable Java objects.
5. The distributed information processing system as recited in claim 1, wherein said requests are made to said module manager as one of a synchronous or asynchronous request, wherein synchronous requests are handled on a first-in-first-out basis, and wherein asynchronous requests are processed and returned when completed.

6. The distributed information processing system as recited in claim 1, wherein instances of said module manager are created each time a new request is received and discarded after the request has been handled.

7. The distributed information processing system as recited in claim 6, wherein instances of said module managers are stateless and multi-threaded.

8. The distributed information processing system as recited in claim 1, wherein information modules are loaded locally and remotely, wherein local modules reside on a same physical device as said module manager, and wherein remote modules are located on other devices.

9. The distributed information processing system as recited in claim 8, wherein communication between locally loaded modules and said module manager is accomplished via memory calls, object inheritance or inter-process communication.

10. The distributed information processing system as recited in claim 8, wherein communication between remotely loaded modules and said module manager is accomplished via TCP/IP sockets.

11. The distributed information processing system as recited in claim 1, further comprising a subscription service that maintains a subscriber database, wherein information is sent by said information modules, said subscription center is consulted to determine to which clients the information should be forwarded.

12. A method of receiving and responding to requests in an information distributing information processing system comprising a client device interface adapted, a module manager, and a plurality of information modules, the method comprising:

receiving a request at said client device interface;

forwarding said request to said module manager;

consulting a registry of available information modules;

forwarding said request to an appropriate information module as determined in accordance with a type of information requested.

13. The method of claim 12, further comprising:
processing the request at said appropriate information module;
generating a response that is returned to said module manager; and
routing said response o said client interface device for delivery to a requestor.

14. The method of claim 12, wherein said requests and responses are formatted as serializable Java objects.

15. The method of claim 12, wherein said requests are made to said module manager as one of a synchronous or asynchronous request, wherein synchronous requests are handled on a first-in-first-out basis, and wherein asynchronous requests are processed and returned when completed.

16. The method of claim 12, wherein said information processing system further comprises a subscription service that maintains a subscriber database, said method further comprising:

generating information in the form of a response at one of said information modules;

consulting said subscriber database; and

forwarding said response to clients in accordance with information in said subscriber database.